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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 002687

SIPDIS

NSC FOR CBARTON
HQ USSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
USAID DCHA/OTI FOR RPORTER

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: GOV. ROJAS BRIEFS AMBASSADOR ON FRAUD CHARGES

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ABELARDO A. ARIAS FOR REASONS 1.4 (d
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Summary

1. (C) Bolivar State Gov. Antonio Rojas Suarez and Bolivar state legal advisor Juan Jose Rendon briefed the Ambassador August 19 on the allegations of fraud uncovered by Rendon in the August 15 presidential recall referendum. Rojas said the opposition has found 1920 voting machines with what they regard as suspicious numbers. The Ambassador urged the opposition to take its evidence to the OAS and Carter Center, and to make a calm and well reasoned argument to the technical experts with each mission. Rojas, a retired Army General, also said he had taken the allegations to the military's unified command. He did not specify to whom, but noted that the allegations were treated with concern. End Summary.

Claims of More Evidence

2. (C) Bolivar State Gov. Antonio Rojas Suarez and Bolivar state legal advisor Juan Jose met with the Ambassador, PolCouns and PolOff on August 19 to discuss the allegations of fraud in the August 15 presidential recall referendum. Rojas and Rendon said there are many electoral tables where tally sheets from voting machines registered the same number of yes votes at all the machines at the table, or a smaller number. Rendon claims this evidence indicates the machines were programmed with an upper limit for yes votes, which artificially suppressed the yes vote overall in the referendum. Rendon showed us original tally sheets (the copies that went to the opposition witnesses) from six tables, with three showing 2 of 3 machines with the same vote count for yes, and three with all the machines showing the same yes vote count. Gov. Rojas claimed that the opposition had now found 1920 machines (out of over 20,000) with similar results.

3. (C) Rendon, who claims to have worked on elections with Mexico's PRI, said he had noted various other patterns of irregularities which they were examining. The Governor noted that he and Rendon had just come from the meeting of the (democratic) Governor's association where others were bringing forth similar results from their states. They now had numbers from nine states, Rendon said, showing similar irregularities.

4. (C) Gov. Rojas told the Ambassador that a computer had been found in a cyber cafe used by members of the Maisanta campaign. He claimed that his supporters, using an electronic address on the computer, had entered a web-site with election results which they could play with. Rendon said they would need a hacker to fully exploit the discovery. The Ambassador encouraged them to present whatever evidence they had to the OAS/CC.

Key Role of OAS/CC

5. (C) The Ambassador told Gov. Rojas and Rendon that they should take the evidence, and present it to the technical experts at the OAS and the Carter Center. He noted the damage caused by Miranda Gov. Enrique Mendoza's confused and excited presentation August 18. The argument, the Ambassador said, was too confusing and technical to convince a skeptical layman, and that technical experts Edgardo Mimica at the Carter Center, and Edgardo Reis at the OAS were the key people they needed to convince. Rendon said they had presented them with their evidence, and that Mimica had been very interested, while Reis was skeptical.

CUFAN

16. (C) Gov. Rojas also said he had spoken to members of the Unified Armed Forces Command (CUFAN) about the fraud allegations. He reported that his contacts had spoken to him about mistrust of the referendum results within the Armed Forces. He noted the unusual silence from the military since the referendum.

Comment

17. (C) The opposition's allegations are mired in technical detail and clouded by the proliferation of theories. Without clarity it is unlikely that they will succeed in convincing international observers that the statistical phenomenon is really significant. In addition, they will also have to face the hard facts of the results of the August 19-20 audit overseen by the Carter Center and the OAS.
Shapiro

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